

Moran Fights to Keep Farm in the Farm Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Despite his efforts to improve the bill, Congressman Jerry Moran today opposed passage of the 2008 Farm Bill for its failure to adequately address the needs of Kansas farmers and ranchers.

"For the last two and a half years, I have worked hard to get a farm bill good for Kansas agriculture," Moran said. "I have had two basic guidelines for this. First, the new farm bill should be at least as good as the current farm bill. This is clearly not the case. Second, Kansas farmers have repeatedly told me to protect direct payments and to maintain strong support for crop insurance. The legislation failed on both accounts."

"With skyrocketing fuel and fertilizer costs, now is not the time to reduce direct payments," Moran said. "Under this bill it is projected that farmers will not receive any countercyclical or loan deficiency payments. Therefore, the direct payment is the only part of the safety net that will be available to help farmers meet the challenges of dramatically rising input costs. The bill also includes provisions that are market and trade distorting."

Moran was appointed in April to the committee charged with working out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the farm bill. During conference committee

meetings, Moran offered an amendment to restore cuts made to direct payments and supported an amendment that would have restored cuts to crop insurance. Both amendments failed on party-line votes.

"With the limited amount of funding available, Congress owed it to the American farmer and taxpayer to use those funds in the most responsible way possible," Moran said. "There are provisions in this bill that spend money on things such as salmon recovery in California and to purchase land from a large timber company in Montana. The money spent on these programs alone could have prevented the cut to direct payments. I cannot put my stamp of approval on a bill I know fails to meet the needs of Kansas farmers and poorly spends taxpayer dollars."

Although Moran opposed the bill, the measure passed with enough votes to override an expected presidential veto. The Senate is expected to join the House in passing the 2008 Farm Bill.

Moran is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture where he serves as the Republican leader of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

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